



Mahoning County
Children Services
330-941-8888 www.mahoningkids.com



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LEARN MORE ABOUT FOSTERING/ADOPTING

INQUIRY INFORMATION

Our goal is to provide Safe, Stable, and Caring foster homes for children in need.



Open Your Heart & Home

Become a
Foster / Adoptive Parent



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL FOSTER CARE INFO & RESOURCES: WWW.MAHONINGKIDS.COM

Learn More...

What's Inside:

- Our Foster Care Program
- Characteristics of Successful Foster/Adoptive Families
- "Am I Ready to Become a Foster/Adoptive Caregiver" Quiz

For More Info:

Margaret Baker

Inquiry/Licensing Specialist
Margaret.Baker@jfs.ohio.gov
330.941.8888 ext. 2893

Shaunte Rogers

Adoption Supervisor
Shaunte.Rogers@jfs.ohio.gov
330.941.8888 ext. 2825

Placement Services Department
330.941.8888

Foster Care Program

Mahoning County Children Services Foster Care Program is seeking individuals to provide a temporary substitute home for children.

Children placed in foster care are:

- Abused, neglected, or dependent
- Birth to 18 years old.
- From a variety of ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.

The Agency is especially in need of minority homes, homes for sibling groups and homes for children 14 to 18 years old.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

for the Foster Care Program include, but are not limited to:

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Can be married or unmarried, if married or divorced, marital status should be consistent for one year.
- May own or rent, as long as there is enough space to accommodate another child.
- Should be in good physical and mental health.
- Must have proof of a steady income.
- Must attend training and participate in the home study process



If you meet the Minimum Requirements and want to start the process of becoming a Licensed Foster Parent ...see the steps below which are **REQUIRED** for licensure:

- 1** You will be invited to participate in the Pre-Service Training Program. This program consists of 11 training sessions. Topics addressed include: abuse/neglect, agency dynamics, issues of separation and attachment, discipline techniques, roles and responsibilities of foster parents, and cultural awareness. You must complete CPR/First Aid Training and Certification as a requirement. You will also be provided two additional hours of training on Ohio Administrative Rules and Agency Policies and Procedures by your assigned licensing specialist.
- 2** Upon completion of the Pre-Service training, a Casework Specialist from the agency's Placement Services Department will be assigned to assist you in the licensing process. Some of the State of Ohio license regulations require:
 - A physical examination of all family members by your own physician will be completed
 - A fire inspection of your home will be conducted
 - A credit check will be done to determine financial stability
 - Five references, other than family members, will be requested
 - Authorization for Information Releases will be obtained for a police record check
 - Fingerprinting will be conducted. Any offenses listed in Appendix A, which is included in the inquiry packet, will disqualify you from being a foster/adoptive caregiver.
- 3** Upon successful completion of the Home study process, you will be recommended for foster parent licensure by the State of Ohio.
- 4** To maintain your license as a foster home, a yearly evaluation and bi-yearly recertification process requires all foster families attend 15 hours of continuing education per year. Monthly workshops, seminars, etc., are offered to foster families through our Continuing Education Program.



Characteristics of Successful Foster/Adoptive Families

Check the boxes of the Characteristics that best describe you

- ☐ Patience, flexibility and creativity
- ☐ Can give a child a sense of belonging and enhance self-esteem
- ☐ Have experience in handling crises
- ☐ Can locate and utilize community resources and supports
- ☐ Are team players and willing to participate in meetings
- ☐ Enjoy challenges and can work towards a goal
- ☐ Appreciate differences in individuals and are non-judgmental
- ☐ Can give to others without expecting something in return
- ☐ Able to accept delayed gratification
- ☐ Utilize creative discipline instead of physical punishment to manage a child's behavior
- ☐ Recognize and support the importance of birth families to foster children
- ☐ Recognize and support the role the foster parents have in adoptive child(ren) lives
- ☐ Eager to learn new knowledge and skills through training and support groups
- ☐ Willing to join with other Foster/Adoptive parents to enhance Mahoning County's Foster/Adoptive Program.



Every day there are children who must leave their homes due to abuse, neglect, and dependency. To reduce the trauma that children feel from being separated from their families, it is best when children are placed in the least restrictive environment, which is in a home like setting with others who will become the child's extended family.

The goal of Foster caregiving is to make a temporary care commitment to the child(ren) while working toward reuniting with his/her birth family.

Foster families help children feel secure and assist the child(ren) with the tasks of normal development. Foster families also assist the birth family towards reunification by providing information on the progress of the child(ren), participating in visitation and offering support, encouragement, and role modeling to parent(s).

The goal of adoption is to make a permanent care commitment to a child(ren) with a forever family. Once the courts determine that reunifying with the birth family or other family members is not possible then an adoptive plan is made. The adoptive parents must help the child(ren) feel secure, be aware of the child's needs, promote normal growth and healthy development.

Am I Ready To Become A Foster/Adoptive Caregiver?

This Questionnaire will help determine if you are ready to become a Foster/Adoptive Caregiver.

1. **Are you able to work as a team with public and private agencies who provide services to children?**
2. **I have enough room in my home for a foster/adoptive child.**
You must have enough bedroom space for a foster/adoptive child. A foster/adoptive child may share a bedroom with another child, but the child cannot share a bedroom with anyone over the age of 18 years. You cannot move out of your bedroom and sleep on the couch to make room for a foster/adoptive child.
3. **I am ready to have a safety inspection of my home done now.**
It is important to live in a safe environment. During the home study process, your case worker will conduct a safety inspection of your house or apartment. Your home must be free of danger and garbage. You must have working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and a fire extinguisher. Medicines, cleaning supplies, poisons and dangerous tools must be inaccessible to children.
4. **I am in good physical, emotional and mental health.**
Being a parent can be demanding. You must be healthy and emotionally stable to care for foster/adopted children. You will be asked to complete a physical exam and psychological evaluation and will be interviewed by a case worker. If you are licensed to care for children under the age of one, the State of Ohio requires caregivers to receive an annual influenza vaccine and to be up to date on the pertussis vaccine.
5. **I have never had a case with the agency due to abuse or neglect.**
If you have had an open case in the past, you may not be able to become a foster/adoptive caregiver. This includes substantiated or indicated cases of abuse and neglect, or if your child was placed in foster care. When we receive your inquiry, we will review our records.
6. **I have adequate income to meet my current family's needs.**
You don't have to be wealthy to become a foster/adoptive caregiver. However, you must have enough income to meet your own family's needs. During the Home Study, you will be asked to provide proof of income.
7. **I have been in my current relationship for more than 12 months.**
Foster/Adoptive caregivers can be single, married, or divorced. However, you must have been in your current marital status for at least 12 months to ensure stability in your relationship.
8. **No adult in my home has ever been convicted of a crime.**
If you or any adult residing in your home has been convicted of certain criminal offenses, you cannot become a foster/adoptive caregiver. Each adult member in your household over the age of 18 will be fingerprinted. If you have specific questions regarding which crimes are prohibited, please do not hesitate to contact us.
9. **I am ready to being the home study process.**
You are ready to begin if you have given serious thought to the decision about becoming a foster/adoptive caregiver and your life and home are stable. "Stable" means that you are not about to move, are not experiencing financial, marital or emotional difficulties, or making any major life changes in the new future. Also, if you rent you will need your landlord's approval and your home must be in good repair.

Circle One

for each statement

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

Yes No

If you answered **"Yes"** to all of the statements, you are ready to begin the process of becoming a foster/adoptive caregiver!

If you answered **"No"** to any statement, contact the Agency so we can address any concerns or answer any questions.

CONTACT: Margaret Baker: 330.941.8888 ext. 2893

